

ANALYSIS OF HOUSE BILL 1371

Modifying provisions that concern the control and prevention of tuberculosis.

SPONSORS: Representative Raderman and Alexander.

BACKGROUND: According to the Department of Health's (DOH) Annual Communicable Disease Report for 1997, tuberculosis (TB) has reemerged as a serious communicable disease after years of decline. The number of TB cases reported annually in Washington and the United States. The numbers of cases reported annually in Washington declined from 713 in 1960 to 207 in 1984. Between 1984 and 1991, that number increased from 207 to 309 - a nearly 50 percent increase. Cases reported declined from 1991 through 1996. However, in 1997, the number of cases again increased. There were 305 reported cases in 1997, an increase from the 285 cases reported in 1996.

The DOH and local health departments are responsible for protecting the public from the spread of TB, a highly infectious and potentially deadly disease. The current laws, spread over four chapters of the RCW, date back as far as 1899. Those laws authorize public health authorities to report and track cases of TB; to investigate suspected cases and conduct examinations and to order treatment, isolation, quarantine. The current laws are crucial to the task of detecting and controlling the spread of TB. However, those laws also contain outdated language that requires revision to reflect current practices. The DOH proposes consolidating and updating the TB statutes to remove obsolete and outdated provisions and to reflect current clinical practices and treatment management.

SUMMARY: The bill revises and consolidates numerous sections of RCW while preserving the basic components for TB control and treatment. The major features are as follows:

- Conforms TB reporting requirements to current national communicable disease reporting standards.
- Repeals and amends numerous outdated provisions such as, reference to state administered tuberculosis hospital facilities which no longer exist.
- Recodifies the current four chapters of RCW into two chapters.